

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5762

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5988

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MIL,PGOV, PINT, CI

SUBJ: JUNTA MEMBER LEIGH ON THE PINOCHET PLAN

1. ON JULY 19, AIR FORCE CINC AND JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL GUSTAVO LEIGH WAS THE GUEST OF HONOR AT THE MONTHLY LUNCHEON OF THE EEC AMBASSADORS HERE. LEIGH PUT ON AN ASTOUNDING SHOW COMPOSED OF ROUGHLY EQUAL PARTS OF CRITICISM OF PINOCHET AND PRESSURE FOR POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS.

2. REGARDING PINOCHET'S JULY 9 SPEECH, LEIGHT SAID THAT THE PLAN PUBLICLY OUTLINED BY PINOCHET WAS MORE CONSERVATIVE AND RESTRICTIVE THAN HE AND OTHERS HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE WHEN PINOCHET OUTLINED HIS REMARKS TO THE CORPS OF GENERALS AND ADMIRALS ON JULY 8. LEIGH SAID THAT HE WAS SURPRISED AND IRRITATED THAT THE DATES WERE SO DISTANT.

3. GENERAL LEIGH SAID THAT THE AIR FORCE CONTINUED TO INSIST ON A THREE-PART PLAN:

--END OF THE STATE OF SIEGE, ELIMINATION OF THE CURFEW AND RETURN TO NORMAL JURIDICAL PROCESSES.

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--THE ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF DINA.

--THE RETURN OF CIVILIANS TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS, PARTICULARLY THE RETURN OF CAREER DIPLOMATS TO AMBASSADORIAL POSTS.

4. COMMENT: LEIGH HAS CRITICIZED ASPECTS OF PINOCHET'S POLICIES IN THE PAST, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME HE HAS

SPOKEN OUT SO FEELINGLY ON CORE ISSUES IN A SEMI-PUBLIC FORUM. PRIVATELY, THE AIR FORCE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY MORE EAGER THAN SISTER SERVICES TO TAKE THE MILITARY OUT OF THE BUSINESS OF RUNNING CHILE DIRECTLY; ABOUT A YEAR AGO IT STEPPED UP CRITICISM OF DINA AND THE CONTINUED NEED FOR THE THE STATE OF SIEGE. THUS, LEIGH'S PRESCRIPTIONS ARE NOT NEW. THEIR SIGNIFICANCE LIE IN THE TIMING, THE AUDIENCE AND INTENSITY.

5. LEIGH IS A COMPLEX FIGURE; HIS MOTIVES ARE NEVER SIMPLE. NO DOUBT HE BELIEVES HE COULD HAVE RUN THE COUNTRY BETTER THAN PINOCHET BUT IS SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT HE IS UNLIKELY TO GET THE CHANCE. THIS TIME WE THINK LEIGH MAY BE SPEAKING FROM CONVICTION ON TOPICS HE VIEWS AS CRUCIAL FOR CHILE'S FUTURE. BUT LEIGH DOES NOT ALWAYS APPEAR SO MODERATE: HIS FACH INTELLIGENCE WAS THE MOST RUTHLESS SERVICE UNTIL OVERSHADOWED BY DINA, AND LEIGH WAS AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF OUTLAWING THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS THIS MARCH. HIS CURRENT POSITION COMES CLOSE TO THREATENING PINOCHET WITH A PUBLIC SCHISM WITHIN THE SERVICES, SOMETHING THE PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO AVOID. BOYATT

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